

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL, 167-W
TOPEKA, KS 66612
(785) 296-7402
angel.roeser@house.ks.gov



P.O. BOX 905
MANHATTAN, KS 66505

ANGEL ROESER
67TH DISTRICT

12 February 2026

To: House Committee on Federal and State Affairs – Representative Tom Kessler, Chair

Re: Verbal Proponent Testimony for HB 2687

Chairman Kessler, Vice-Chair Schmoe, Ranking Minority Meyer, and members of the committee – My name is Angel Roeser, I represent District 67, which covers the western portion of Manhattan, Kansas. I am also a student pilot working toward my Private Pilot License. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2687.

Currently, seaplanes, also known as floatplanes, are effectively prohibited from taking off, landing, or operating on Kansas waters due to a patchwork of unclear and inconsistent regulatory requirements. While there is no explicit statewide ban on seaplanes, the lack of clear statutory authorization has resulted in confusion, excessive administrative hurdles, and limited access for pilots who wish to operate legally and safely.

The approval process depends entirely on who owns or manages a particular body of water. For lakes managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a pilot must submit a formal request to the District Engineer. This request is not limited to an individual pilot but seeks permission for all seaplane operations on that water. The Corps must then evaluate safety, compatibility, and public interest considerations and formally designate an operating area under 36 CFR Part 327. In practice, reaching this stage is rare, and individual authorization is nearly impossible.

If the lake is owned by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, pilots must seek written authorization directly from the agency. That authorization often includes time-of-day limitations, seasonal restrictions, designated operating areas, and insurance requirements. Even then, counties or cities may prohibit aircraft operations regardless of state ownership of the water. Again, approvals are rare and highly site-specific.

For city, county, or privately-owned waters, pilots must obtain written permission from the owner or governing body, verify compliance with local ordinances, and still adhere to all applicable federal aviation regulations. The result is a confusing, fragmented system that discourages lawful operations and provides no clear statewide standard.

At the same time, pilots operating seaplanes are already subject to extensive federal safety requirements. To act as pilot-in-command of a seaplane, a pilot must hold at least a Private Pilot Certificate with an Airplane

Single-Engine Land rating or higher, obtain an additional Single-Engine Sea or Multi-Engine Sea rating, train with a certificated seaplane instructor, log specialized water operations, and successfully complete a practical test with a Designated Pilot Examiner. Pilots must also hold a valid medical certificate.

The aircraft itself must be airworthy, equipped with floats installed under an FAA-approved Supplemental Type Certificate, properly weighed and balanced, and compliant with all Part 91 equipment requirements. Once on the water, seaplanes are treated as vessels and are subject to navigation rules, no-wake zones, and speed restrictions, while pilots remain accountable under FAR 91.13 for careless or reckless operation.

In short, significant safeguards already exist to ensure safety for pilots, passengers, and others using Kansas waterways. I attempted to identify seaplane accident trends in neighboring states—including Nebraska, Missouri, and Oklahoma—over the past five years and was unable to find evidence suggesting a safety concern unique to seaplane operations. Missouri is considered one of the more seaplane-friendly states in the Midwest, with statutes that clearly recognize aircraft operating on water as subject to both aviation and maritime law.

As the Aviation Capital of the World, Kansas should have clear, modern statutes that reflect current aviation practices. HB 2687 provides that clarity. It affirms that seaplanes are lawful aircraft in Kansas and removes unnecessary regulatory uncertainty that currently prevents access to otherwise suitable water landing sites. This bill doesn't change who regulates aviation – it changes whether Kansas law clearly recognizes seaplanes at all. It improves clarity, supports safety, and brings Kansas in line with our neighboring states. In addition to this, we also open the opportunity for our aviation educators across the state to offer seaplane ratings, innovation in waterproof VTOL (Vertical Take-Off and Landing) drones, and tech programs can offer education for floats installed under an FAA-Approved STC. With the presence of seaplanes comes a demand for fuel, which increases profitability of FBOs and airports that can be used for maintenance, new runways, and additional hangars – which is a burden for rural airports in Kansas already. From an economic standpoint, this bill attempts to invest into the state. The bill attempts to contribute to our state's aviation pride, encourages education and innovation, and simply cuts government red tape.

As the Committee deliberates HB 2687, I respectfully urge favorable consideration for its passage. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony and if you have questions or require additional information at a later date, please get in touch with me at Angel.Roeser@house.ks.gov or 785-236-8634.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angel Roeser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "r".

Representative Angel Roeser

Kansas House of Representatives, District 67 Manhattan